

# FAWU BULLETIN

## Newsletter For Members and Staff

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Cnr. NY1 & NY 110, Gugulethu, 7750

Tel: 021 637 9040 Fax: 086 508 6065

E-mail: dominique-fawu@telkomsa.net



### **Supervisor Burns Woman At Work**

A 20- year old woman, Johanna Mashilo of Thabazimbi in the Limpopo province and a member of FAWU, says that her supervisor, Philemon Moima has poured boiling water all over her around 29 May 2009 after they had an argument about her absence from work.

The comrade claims she had only asked Moima, the foreman, why he told their employer that she was absent from work. She says that they were in the kitchen of Matlakele Game Lodge where she had worked and was boiling water for tea. Comrade Johanna says that the foreman then attacked her with his fists and took water from the pot and poured it over her. She says Moima told her he wanted to teach her manners.

As a result of this, she suffered third degree burns and was dismissed from work after failing to report for duty after the incident. She did report the incident at the Rooiberg police stations and a case of assault against the foreman was opened. The supervisor was arrested for a mere two days. He was released on three hundred rand's bail that was allegedly paid by the employer. The case was to be heard on 25 June 2009 but was postponed due to a lack of state prosecutors. At this time the police and the company remain uncooperative despite various attempts by the union. Nelson Semanya, provincial secretary says, " The Thabazimbi area is notorious for racist attacks and most of farm managers of game lodge owners have special relationships with either the magistrate or state prosecutors which are mainly white people."

The employer, Martin Nel paid for the supervisor's bail and has dismissed cde Johanna without even so much as a hearing.

The union took the matter to the CCMA but cde Nelson says that is difficult to make contact with the employer since there are no known telephone and fax numbers at the farm, just a cell phone number.

## **FAWU & COSATU Protest At Madibeng Magistrate's Court Over Shooting of Boys**

(Davie Swart Case at Madibeng Magistrate Court on 7<sup>TH</sup> July 2009)

The Congress of South Trade Unions, led by its General Secretary, Zwelinzima Vavi, had a demonstration, picketing and march to the Madibeng (Brits) Magistrate Court on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009. The COSATU GS said that the federation will proceed with protest at courts where farmers are accused of the assault and murder of farm workers and their families. Comrade Vavi further said that the federation will boycott those farmers who are exploiting farm workers.

COSATU members, churches, civil society and business people in the area of Madibeng have joined the fight against exploitation, racism and killing of farm workers by white farmers by participating in the march.

The group demanded the withdrawal of the bail against Davie Swart, for his arrest, and for his case to be referred to the High Court in Pretoria.

Says, Tseleng Tau, provincial secretary of the North West Province, says that the demonstration was successful with the majority of members participating being farm workers. Unfortunately, the case against Davie Swart, the employer, has been postponed to August this year and he was released on bail of about R 7000. The postponement is due to some outstanding reports from doctors who treated the boys after being shot. One boy, Thabo Thabane (15) apparently still has a bullet in his head and at this stage, it is not known when the bullet is supposed to be removed.”

## **Expofrut Workers Outraged at General Manager**

About 270 workers employed by Expo-Frut/UNIVEG in Piketberg and members of FAWU are on a protected strike since 24 June 2009.

Workers are unhappy and frustrated over the fact that management continues to undermine collective agreements between the two parties.

Workers are united in their demands to have the General Manager removed as he does not seem to be interested in building good relationships. They have signed a petition to this effect.

Workers here say that shop stewards are being victimised, with some receiving final written warnings and there are constant attempts at union bashing. Some workers claimed that management has even asked them to resign from the union. The matter of the dismissals of shop stewards has been submitted to the CCMA.

## **Transformation In The Winelands**

The Wine Industry Development Association (WIDA), which was recently launched in Paarl, seeks to play a key role in creating a non-racial industry by leading co-ordinated efforts to address development issues in the wine industry.

WIDA will deploy a range of support mechanisms and tactics, including bursaries for wine-related studies, workshops, and providing information on housing right.

The launch also featured the wines of up-and-coming winemakers, three of whom are woman-owned: Kholisa Wines, Seven Sisters, Libby's Pride Wines, M'hudi and Yamme.

Denver Williams, Director of WIDA, says since their initial inception in 2006, their unit has taken time to develop capacity, strategy and an operational framework.

This is to ensure, he says, that its work is successfully focused on four pillars: social development by addressing the needs of vulnerable communities, people development through skills development and training, economic support with broad-based empowerment, and industrial relations to improve the working conditions of farm workers.

Hosting the launch of WIDA offered the Santam Agriculture business unit the opportunity to associate their business with the efforts at development and transformation that are necessary to continue the leadership of the industry on the global stage says Dr Tobias Doyer, head of Santam Agriculture.

-From Paarl Post, 2 July 2009

## **Minister of Labour: Report Unlawful Treatment**

Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana has urged workers to immediately lodge complaints at a nearest Labour office any acts of unlawful treatment by employers.

The Minister was reacting to weekend media reports alleging that domestic workers at a Parliamentary residence in Cape Town were being paid below the stipulated minimum wage and were not registered with the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

He condemned such transgressions, particularly by people who are supposed to be the custodians of law, and vowed that the Department would conduct investigations at the Acacia Park Village to verify such allegations.

“While the law must take its course against anyone found to be non-compliant with it, I would however urge people not to generalize when reporting these cases so as to allow the Department to carry out its inspections effectively,” he said.

Labour inspectors have in the past swooped on the Acacia Park village where several non-complying domestic employers were dealt with.

Department of Labour, 8 July 2009

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